



Israel- and Jew-Hate at Harvard  
What's Harvard's Education Got to Do With It?  
by the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance (HJAA)

April 2024

## Executive Summary

The Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance (HJAA) was formed in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, when more than 30 Harvard student groups “h[e]ld the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.” Student protesters endorsed the violence of the Hamas terrorists while calling for the obliteration of the Jewish State of Israel.

These events rang a wake-up call that something was profoundly and systemically wrong at Harvard. We felt compelled to understand what was happening at our beloved alma mater and what Jewish students were experiencing. Over the next three months, we conducted over 50 interviews/conversations with current and former students and faculty members.

At the same time, seven HJAA members (with day jobs as educators, executive recruiters, authors, family doctors, social workers, and software developers) sought to understand the extent to which Harvard’s education was contributing to the crisis now consuming the campus. We launched an **education audit** to examine a sample of Harvard’s schools, departments, centers and programs, courses, lectures, faculty, and visiting instructors—with a focus on the 2022 - 23 school year. While considerable focus has been on student-generated anti-Semitism at Harvard, we were unaware of anyone documenting in detail the **educational and faculty dimensions of the problem**.

Our goal was not to provide a comprehensive answer to the education issues facing Harvard today. We are not on campus and therefore can’t access classroom discussions or many syllabi. That said, to perform our audit, we interviewed students and faculty and reviewed two-years of course catalogs; department websites, calendars, and suggested resources; select syllabi provided by students; and social media posts and videos / pictures from students and faculty. The material we accessed and reviewed was more than enough to demonstrate that systemic Israel- and Jew-hate existed at Harvard *well before October 7<sup>th</sup>*. Now, it’s just more widespread, visible, and accepted.

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**Part I of this report presents the findings of our education audit.** Harvard’s faculty and other speakers across schools, departments, programs, and events teach and role model the language, frameworks, and false narratives that fan the flame of hate.

- The only script is that Israel, the only Jewish state, along with its supporters, embody the world’s worst evils—settler-colonialism, racism, apartheid, and genocide. While Israel is treated as a cartoon villain, Palestinians are innocent victims of white colonial oppression, and terrorist groups are [“political movements.”](#)
- Harvard’s Divinity School and School of Public Health devote entire programs to the Palestinian cause. (The Public Health School also partners with Birzeit University, a West Bank terrorist-abetting university that [prohibits Israeli Jews from campus](#), [hosts military](#)

- [parades for Hamas](#), and posted [“Glory for martyrs”](#) three days after October 7.)
- Harvard hosts many event speakers who deny the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre or blame it entirely on Israel, celebrate violence (against Israel and the West), and/or unapologetically traffic in age-old anti-Semitic tropes. Their anti-Semitic paper trail includes: “They [Israelis] [harvest organs](#) of the martyred [Palestinians],” and “[American Jewish immigrants have always been a foundational building block for the white supremacist infrastructure in this country.](#)”
  - There appear to be few faculty, if any, drawing on the ample, highly regarded peer-reviewed materials to present alternative perspectives to students or directly contradict the script. While other departments are teaching Harvard’s students about “settler-colonialism” and “Israel genocide and apartheid,” the Center for Jewish Studies offers [“Seeing the Kabbalah Through Its Trees: New Perspectives of The Kabbalistic Tree”](#) and [“Zombies and Spirits, Ghosts and Ghouls: Interactions between the Living and the Dead.”](#)

**Part II turns to the testimonials from Harvard’s Jewish and Israeli students.** With few exceptions, those we interviewed requested full anonymity for fear of academic, social, and, in the worst case, physical repercussions. Jewish and Israeli students talked with us about their experiences with anti-Semitism at Harvard long before October 7<sup>th</sup>—from day one to graduation, within the Harvard classroom and elsewhere on campus, during student-to-student interactions, and on Sidechat, the social media platform for Harvard’s students. This treatment is inextricably linked to the education—what is and isn’t taught—and spreads from there.

*The treatment of Israeli- and Jewish students is inextricably linked to the education—what is and isn’t taught—and spreads from there.*

Testimonial examples include:

- “Israelis are the only people where their nationality is held against them. Doesn't happen to my friend who is Russian.... [My Israeli friend] was called a war criminal.”
- “I attempted to attend the History department’s Palestine event but was turned away by an organizer who recognized me, despite my having registered, with him giving the excuse of a lack of space.”
- “[The professor] said, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘Israel.’ He looked at me and said ... ‘I need to ask you to leave the class....’”
- “The class was just a 12-week hate fest.”
- “There was a teaching fellow who ... was saying look at all the ways that Jews contributed to the Holocaust happening.”
- “I won’t take a class on Israel and/or the Middle East because they will always distort facts and I won’t be able to write an essay with my views that won’t get marked down.”
- “Because of my Jewish and Zionist identity, people think I am a monster. I have heard people say, ‘Zionists should be slain.’”
- “I am scared to be a Jew here right now.”

- “He and pretty much all the other [orthodox] guys on campus have started wearing baseball caps.”
- Sidechat posts include: “Gas the Jews” and “stfu pedo lover! All of you Zionists are the same. Killers and rapists of children!”

We will leave it to the academics to debate theoretically whether anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. The mezuzahs ripped off door frames, the police car outside of Hillel, orthodox students hiding their kippahs under baseball caps—it speaks for itself.

*“It’s okay to be Jewish at Harvard, as long as you aren’t ‘too Jewish.’”*

We do not claim that every Jewish student is affected. For, as one student clarified: “It’s okay to be Jewish at Harvard, as long as you aren’t ‘too Jewish—’” with ‘too Jewish’ meaning being Israeli, expressing support for Israel, showing any external sign of being Jewish, or challenging any part of the anti-Israel script.

In presenting this report, HJAA has no interest in stifling free speech or academic freedom, which we believe are prerequisites for genuine learning. But when Harvard leaders and faculty legitimize—even amplify—the crisis facing Israelis and Jewish students, it is time to look under the hood.

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As HJAA members, we started by examining the impact of Harvard’s education on Israeli and other Jewish students. We now understand that the problem is far deeper. As one faculty member explained: “Yes, [Jewish students] are getting attacked.... But every student should feel ripped off.... The last place you will have a free, interesting discussion is a Harvard classroom.” A student with whom we spoke corroborated this: “Almost everybody I know, including myself, does not represent their true attitudes in the classroom.”

As Harvard alumni, we hope that this examination, which is ultimately an examination of *veritas*, will benefit the entire Harvard community.

*“Every student should feel ripped off.... The last place you will have a free, interesting discussion is a Harvard classroom.” - Faculty member*

## PART I: Findings of HJAA's Education Audit

### A. The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict Permeates Harvard's Instruction in Expected and Unexpected Places

While we expected to find the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) focusing on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, we were surprised to find that many other parts of Harvard do as well. The volume, in fact, is notable given the fact that Israel is [a tiny country \(the size of New Jersey\)](#) whose total population is 9 million, 7 million of whom are Jewish.) Coverage of other world disputes and suffering appears to pale in comparison.

#### The Israeli-Palestinian conflict saturates the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (“CMES”)

- CMES doesn't offer courses because it is not an academic department, but it sponsors dozens of events annually.
  - Last school year (2022-23), [close to 20% of CMES events](#) (10 of 56 events) addressed the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. This was equal to the number of events on Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt combined.
  - CMES gave equal focus to only one other topic: the Ottoman Empire (which lasted 600 years and spanned Southeast Europe, West Asia, and North Africa).
  - In 2015, the bloodiest year of the Syrian civil war when 110,000 people were killed, [CMES held only 3 Syrian-focused events.](#)
  - From October 7, 2023 to April 2024, CMES sponsored 17 events on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, 25% of all of its events.
- After October 7<sup>th</sup>, CMES joined [a collaboration of other universities and Birzeit University](#) to organize fourteen “teach-in” sessions to put “Gaza in context.”
- CMES has announced that [one of its two themes](#) for its 2024 - 2025 visiting research program is “Palestine.”
- It has been reported that [CMES received \\$1.5 billion](#) from foreign entities and governments from 2020 - 2023.

*In 2022-23, roughly 20% of CMES events focused on Israel and the Palestinian Territories—equal to the number of events on Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt combined.*

The School of Public Health has a program exclusively devoted to the Palestinians, the [Palestine Program for Health and Human Rights](#), in partnership with Birzeit University.

- This program offers the [Palestine Social Medicine Course](#), a three-week course at Birzeit University in the West Bank to “[introduce\[\] students to the social, structural, political, and historical aspects that determine Palestinian health.](#)”
- Birzeit University [prohibits Israeli Jews from campus](#), [hosts military parades for Hamas](#) featuring children wearing mock explosive vests, names buildings and events after convicted terrorists involved in plotting attacks against Jewish civilians around the world, and posted “[Glory for martyrs](#)” three days after October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Another public health course, “[GHP 264: The Settler Colonial Determinants of Health](#),” makes Palestine/Israel one of three case studies.
- The School of Public Health’s many events on Israel and the Palestinians can be found [here](#).

*Harvard has a partnership with a West Bank university, Birzeit, which prohibits Israeli Jews from campus, holds rallies honoring Hamas, and posts “Glory for martyrs” 3 days after October 7<sup>th</sup>.*

At Harvard’s Divinity School, the [Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative](#) (RCPI) appears to [focus entirely on the Palestine cause](#). (RCPI sits within the [Religion and Public Life](#) Program.)

- Between 2019 - 2023, RCPI’s [fellowship program](#) has brought roughly 23 fellows to Harvard, the vast majority of whom are engaged in projects related to the Palestinians.
- Divinity School courses include [Religion, Nationalism, and Settler Colonialism: the Case of Israel/Palestine](#) (HDS 3337) and [Learning in Context: Narratives of Displacement and Belonging in Israel/Palestine](#) (HDS 3335).
- HDS 3335 also offers a [trip to the West Bank and Gaza](#).<sup>1</sup>

Harvard faculty have also spearheaded and/or signed five university-wide statements/petitions since May 2021 which draws additional attention to the conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard’s “**Pal-Trek**” also sends an annual Harvard delegation (170 students in 2023) to the Palestinian territories. The trip is sponsored by the **American Muslims for Palestine** (AMP) ([which recent congressional testimony alleges is the American wing of Hamas](#)).

- [Statement by Harvard Faculty in Support of Palestinian Liberation](#), 80 faculty signers (May 2021).
- [Statement in Support of The Harvard Crimson and Palestinian Liberation](#), 49 signers (May 2022). This statement follows the Crimson's endorsement of BDS, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel.
- [Faculty Open Letter to President Claudine Gay](#), 79 signers (October 19, 2023).
- [Harvard Faculty Statement In Support of Academic Freedom](#), 122 signers (Nov 13, 2023).
- [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) 111 signers (originally posted in January 2024). Revised and reposted [here](#) on February 21, 2024).
- Individual Harvard Schools and Centers also issued their own statements after October 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>2</sup>
- Note, there is nothing in this report that challenges the rights of faculty members and others to voice their opinions and sign documents as individual scholars. This right does not give cover [posting indisputably anti-Semitic cartoons](#) as the new Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine did a month after they formed. Because many of these same faculty members hold prominent positions in core academic departments and centers, it is important to understand how their political views affect their decisions on hiring and curricula.

**A core group of roughly 47 Harvard faculty members drives the Palestinian-focused programs, courses, and events, writes in the popular press, helms trips to the Palestinian territories, creates and/or signs the petitions/statements, and [joins \(or leads\) protests](#).**

- 15 of the 47 faculty members are full professors, 10 are associate/assistant professors, 13 are lecturers, 2 are visiting professors, and 7 are instructors.<sup>3</sup>
- These faculty primarily span the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the School of Public Health, the Divinity School, the Law School, the Kennedy School, and the Medical School. They also are affiliated with the following centers: the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the Weatherhead Institute of International Affairs, the Carr Center for Human Rights, and the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History.

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<sup>2</sup> The Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine is under the umbrella of [the US Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel \(USACBI\)](#) which has pushed for academic boycotts of Israel and the closing of study-abroad programs there for years. USACBI is funded by [Al-Awda](#), which vocally supports terrorist groups and the elimination of Israel.

<sup>3</sup> This number only includes those Harvard faculty with clear teaching responsibilities. 35 of the 47 joined the new [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) in January 2024; 11 others aren't members of this new group but also actively promote the script described in the next Section. We don't include the 14 teaching fellows who joined the Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine even though they, too, may be teaching students.

- Within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, they span multiple departments: Government, history, sociology, music, visual arts, anthropology, English, African American studies, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights, and Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

## B. The Script: Israel as the Embodiment of the Worst Evils

As the sample course and event descriptions below demonstrate, Harvard's educational offerings on the conflict rely on the same script. Israel is a cartoon villain: a white, racist, genocidal, colonial-settler, apartheid state. The Palestinians are innocent victims of colonial-settler oppression, with no agency or responsibility of their own. It follows that when Harvard's instructors make Israel the top villain of even important theoretical frameworks while ignoring alternative perspectives, Harvard's students accept that one-sided narrative.

*Israel is a cartoon villain: a white, racist, genocidal, colonial-settler, apartheid state.*

These are verbatim course descriptions:

- *Religion, Nationalism, and Settler Colonialism: The Case of Israel/Palestine* ([HDS 3337](#) - Professor Diane Moore). “[E]xamines the conceptual logic of using a **settler-colonial** lens to interpret the history and politics of Israel/Palestine ... [and] identify the relevance of **global anti-racism** and social movements...”
- *A Critical Introduction to the Study of the Middle East* ([HIST 1800](#) - Professor Jesse Howell). “[I]ntroduces students to the medieval and modern history of the Middle East while exploring diverse theoretical frameworks ... [including] **orientalism**, modernity, capitalism, **gender**, **(post)colonialism**, nationalism, anthropocene.”
- *Middle East Ethnography: Discourse, Politics, and Culture* ([Anthropology 2690](#) - Professor Steven C. Caton). “The discursive construction of culture and its complex politics are examined in a wide range of ethnographies that have been written recently on countries in the Middle East, including ... Israel/Palestine.... Among the theoretical topics to be considered are **orientalism**, **colonialism and post-colonialism**, nationalism, self, **gender**, and tribalism.”
- *The Settler Colonial Determinants of Health* ([GHP 264](#), School of Public Health - Professor Bram Wispelwey) introduces students “...to the **concept of settler colonialism** and its health equity implications for **indigenous and settler populations**.”



- *Coloniality, Race, and Catastrophe* ([Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights 139](#) - Professor Mayra Rivera). “[E]xplores the relationship between **coloniality, race, and ecology** through the lens of “catastrophe.” (We couldn’t access the syllabi to count the lectures devoted to Israel and the Palestinians.)
- *Re-mediating Colonialism* ([English 90RC](#), Pamela Klassen). This seminar focuses on the public memory of **settler colonialism** and Indigenous dispossession in North America and Turtle Island....(Turtle Island is a name for North and Central America, used by some Indigenous peoples, as well as by some Indigenous rights activists who are making the case that [Palestine’s and Turtle Island’s liberation are entwined](#))

Harvard’s events and panels also promote the same script (also see Appendix A)

- Before October 7, 2023
  - Harvard Law School sponsored an event for students who had traveled to the Palestinian territories to “[bear witness to the \*\*apartheid, military occupation, and settler-colonialism\*\* firsthand.](#)” This trip is reputedly sponsored by American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) which has been credibly described as Hamas's 501c3 in the United States.
  - [Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and Decolonization beyond Partition](#) (Leila Farsakh, Maha Nassar, Susan Akram). “Shows how notions of citizenship, sovereignty, and nationhood are being rethought within the broader context of **decolonization.**”
  - [Settler Colonialism, Structural Racism, and The Palestinian Right to Health](#) *Special Edition: A Conversation with the Authors* (Osama Tanous, Ben Bouquet, Maria Helbich, Ghada Majadli, Razzan Quran, Emily Schneider). “[E]xplore[s] the conceptual and material connections between **settler colonialism, structural racism, and human rights** approaches to Palestinian health.”
- After October 7, 2023
  - *Palestine and the Historian: [A History Department Symposium](#)*, included a Panel: “**Borders, Apartheid, and Carcerality.**”
  - [We Charge Genocide](#), *the Potential and Limits of International Law* (Nora Erakat).

- [\*"Colonizing Palestine: The Zionist Left and the Making of the Palestinian Nakba,"\*](#)<sup>4</sup>(Areej Sabbagh-Khoury).
- [\*Palestinian Women in Gaza: War, Health, and Feminist Solidarity,\*](#) (Zahra Ali, Lila Sharif, Sara Ihmoud).

CMES' recommended [Readings and Digital Resources on Palestine](#) is as one-sided as the above courses and events.

- Professor [Cemal Kafadar](#) (CMES Director) and Professor [Rosie Bsheer](#) (CMES Associate Director) curated a list of roughly 60 resources with the expressed purpose to “offer analyses and histories of expulsion, **occupation, settler colonialism**, forced evictions, home demolitions, and annexation that situate the current struggle as part of the ongoing **Nakba of 1948 and in relation to the Naksa of 1967.**”

The January 2024 statement of the [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) presents the script in its most complete form.

- “The US government, media, and other institutions of knowledge production have long provided financial, military, moral, and political cover for the Israeli **occupation** and its **colonial, racial violence.**”
- “We call on the university to withdraw investments from the State of Israel and all companies that sustain Israeli **apartheid, settler colonialism**, and systematic human rights abuses against Palestinians.”
- “As educational workers, we are focused on boycotts of Israeli academic institutions that support **apartheid** and **colonial occupation.**”

**Do Harvard courses and faculty also excuse or even valorize violence against Israel?**

- [CMES' website](#) references Hamas 15 times without using the word terror or terrorism.
- Roughly a decade ago, a Harvard lecturer who is an associate of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, published a book claiming Hamas had “emphasized not political violence but rather community development and civic restoration....” The lecturer still hasn’t acknowledged any contradiction with her previous claim.
- [Jihad, War and Peace in Islamic Law and Practice](#) (MODMDEST 207), taught by Emad Shahin, describes terrorist organizations (Al-Qaeda and ISIS) as “**contemporary political movements.**” Excerpts from a required reading: “[T]he suicide bomber belongs in an important sense to a liberal tradition of armed conflict for the establishment or defense of a national community.”

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<sup>4</sup> The meaning of “the Nakba” is hotly debated. In Arabic, “Nakba,” which means “catastrophe,” is the term Arab countries use to describe the 1948 Arab Israeli War. Israel and others call this war “the War of Independence.” As with everything else related to this subject, there are [multiple perspectives](#) on the evolution in the word’s meaning.

- In her EdX course, Professor Diane Moore, Associate Dean of the Religion and Public Life Program at the Divinity School, describes the terrorist group Hamas as **“a Palestinian Islamic movement, founded with the goal of establishing a Palestinian state that includes the West Bank.”**
- A now-removed, October 13, 2024 statement issued by the Divinity School’s Religion and Public Life Program acknowledged the “losses on both sides.” It went on to say, **“Start with the rockets fired into Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and not with the illegal occupation of Palestinian land by Israel and the blockade of Gaza since 2007, and you have an entirely different story.”** Note the passive-voice mention of “rockets fired into Israel” as the reference to the October 7<sup>th</sup> events rather than the self-reported (and self-recorded) maiming, raping, torturing, abducting, and murdering of over 1000 civilians, including Palestinian Muslims.

### **The Source of the Script**

#### **Soviet Union Cold War Propaganda Disseminated to Western Academics**

There is now substantial literature, including [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), on how many of the anti-Israel slogans were the brainchild of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The Soviets wanted to weaken and divide Israel, Jews, and America and unify the Arab world under Soviet leadership, but they also recognized that overt anti-Semitism wouldn’t fly so soon after the Holocaust.

So, they made anti-Semitism respectable through “Anti-Zionism.” Soviet apparatchiks applied age-old anti-Semitic tropes to Israel, invented new ones to resonate with left-wing Western academics, and then packaged and disseminated the propaganda directly to the European and American Left and the developing world. Its staying power is due, in part, to [elder Arab leaders](#) who were educated and financed by the USSR.

We can thank Soviet propaganda for many of the slogans we hear across Harvard’s campus today, including:

- **“Zionism is Racism.”**
- **“Zionists weaponize anti-Semitism.”**
- **“Anti-Zionism is not equal to anti-Semitism.”**
- **“Israel is conducting genocide.”**
- **Israel is a “settler colonial state.”** (This was coined in 1965 by a Syrian-Palestinian academic/diplomat, [Fayez Sayegh](#), before Israel controlled the Palestinian territories.)

This history explains why, according to Einat Wilf, Israeli scholar, former politician, and Harvard graduate, every time someone repeats these slogans, [“a Soviet angel claps its wings.”](#)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Labeling Israel an “apartheid state” began at an NGO Forum in 2001, in Durban, South African (during the UN’s [World Conference against Racism](#)).

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## C. Balanced Voices or Alternative Perspectives?

Given Harvard's mission is "[to advance new ideas and promote enduring knowledge](#)," we would have expected that the university would prioritize, above all, preparing its students to research, analyze, debate, and grapple with the most complex topics and problems of our time.

An independent, third-party audit will be essential to find those Harvard faculty who are, at the very least, introducing students to the large and highly regarded peer-reviewed body of literature on the conflict that provides an alternative perspective to the virulently anti-Israel materials.

As Appendix B demonstrates, there is more than enough existing material on the conflict's complexity and the script's omissions, distortions, and accuracies. This suggests only two possibilities: either Harvard's professors know this material and choose to ignore it, or they do not even know about it. Either way, it is not a good look for Harvard.

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**In our review, we found a few Harvard offerings that seem to offer greater balance or another perspective on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict—but only a few.**

- Harvard Law School sponsored three such events in February 2023: [Progressive Case for Israel](#) (Former NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio); [Deconstructing Apartheid: International Humanitarian Law & Israel](#) (Anne Herzberg); and [Diversity in Israel](#) (Anne Herzberg).
- Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, the following events/series seem to seek more balance:
  - An [event about the war](#) offered by Professor Noah Feldman in November 2023.
  - A series, [Middle East Dialogues](#), hosted by Kennedy School Professor Tarek Masoud to engage diverse speakers (one of whom, unfortunately, had previously [claimed that Israelis were the October 7<sup>th</sup> perpetrators](#) and Hamas militants were the victims).

- A [series sponsored by the Weatherhead Center](#) about the war (although some of the speakers focused largely on what Israel did wrong in the year before October 7th).
- The Director of Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies, Professor Derek Penslar, offers a course, Jews in the Modern World (History 1017), that has some lectures on Israel which seem more balanced.

Overall, however, the Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) seems to want to avoid the topic of modern Israel almost entirely.

*Perhaps most surprisingly, the Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) seems to want to avoid the topic of Israel almost entirely.*

- In 2023-24, only one out of the 40 courses under the CJS umbrella (excluding language courses) even partially relates to Israel. See [here](#) and [here](#). Examples of these courses include:
  - *Medicine in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust—Anatomy as Example for Changes in Medical Science*
  - *Zombies and Spirits, Ghosts and Ghouls: Interactions between the Living and the Dead*
  - *Early Christian Apocrypha*
  - *Jewish Mysticism: From the Spanish Expulsion to the New Age*
  - *Advanced Topics in Jewish Law: The Law of the Messiah*
  - *Jewish Law and Critical Theory Seminar*

*In 2023-24, only one out of the 40 courses offered by Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies focuses even partially on Israel.*

- Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, the topic of only 3 of the [34 CJS-sponsored events](#) is the war between Israel and Hamas or the crisis facing Jews worldwide. Among the other events:
  - *Ethiopian Jewish Identity: A Journey through the Prism of Scientific Knowledge*
  - *Black & Jewish, a Talk Series, I was not black, I became black here: Formation of Blackness in Israel*
  - *Jews and Crypto-Christianity in 18th-Century Europe: The Case of Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschütz*
  - *Disastrous Diseases and Ritual Resilience: Early Modern Jews Confront Plague*
  - *The Missing Link? Early Modern Jewish Scholasticism*
  - *From the Four Corners of the World: Judeo-Arabic Journalism in 19th-20th Century North Africa*

- *Jewish Prayers for Divine Vengeance*
- *It Could Lead to Dancing*
- *Jews in Modern Europe Seminar*
- *Israel at its Finest Hour: Emotional Management on the Eve of the 1967 War*
- *Seeing Another People: Historical American Jewish Encounters with Palestinians*
- CJS Professors hired by Harvard since 2000 may have other priorities.
  - [One](#) has expertise in “critical theory and gender and sexuality studies.”
  - [Another](#) focuses on “the interplay between Yiddish, Russian, and Hebrew language and literature in modern, secularizing Jewish culture ... especially as they relate to queer and gender studies, multilingualism, ex-Orthodoxy, and migration.”
  - [A third CJS professor](#) is a “critical theorist and a historian of modern European philosophy and social thought, specializing in Frankfurt School critical theory, phenomenology, existentialism, and Western Marxism.”
- [Visiting professors/lecturers](#) do not appear to be filling the gap.
  - In 2022-23, CJS brought in an Israeli historian to teach two courses: one on the Eastern European Jews 1700-1939 and the other on modern Jewish politics (which addresses “Israel/Palestine” through the twentieth century but focuses on Central and Eastern Europe).
  - In 2023-24, the focus of one visiting lecturer is “diversity-focused journalism;” another’s course is on Jews in the medieval period.
  - The theme of CJS’s 2023-24 fellowship is “Jewish migration in the 16th-21st centuries.”

## D. Event Speakers and Visiting Professors with a Published Track Record of Israel- and Jew-Hate

Harvard invites to campus event speakers who celebrate violence (against Israel and the West), and/or traffic in anti-Semitic tropes, including the [blood libel](#) claim that Jews kill non-Jews to use their blood for their ritual food and drink.) More recently, speakers deny the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre or blame it entirely on Israel.

### Examples of Harvard’s Event Speakers

#### **Dalal Saeb Iriqat, speaker at Kennedy School**

- [“What happened on 10/7?”](#) The burnt bodies were Hamas militants & now we learn Israeli helicopter fire may have killed ravers!”

**Rashid Khalidi**, Columbia University professor who has presented at multiple Harvard talks/conferences (and, according to numerous sources, was the [former spokesman for the Palestinian Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) in the 1970’s):

- Referring to “a group of people, a lot of them in Israel and some in the United States,” said, “Unfortunately, these people infest the Trump transition team; these people are going to [infest our government](#) as of January 20.”
- “We are not witnessing a struggle between two different peoples occupying land but “a settler colonial war on Palestine.”

**Mohammed el-Kurd**, frequent guest of the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), who has spoken at HLS in 2021, 2022, and 2023:

- Claimed that “they [Israelis] [harvest organs](#) of the martyred [Palestinians], feed their warriors our own.”
- Stated that [Zionists have an “unquenchable thirst for Palestinian blood.”](#)
- [Celebrated the Second Intifada](#) (five years of Palestinian terrorism against Israel): “Today marks 21 years since the start of the Second Intifada. Glory to those who resisted and sacrificed. Glory to the martyrs . . . . The struggle continues until liberation.”
- Complained on Twitter that Palestinians are unable to [riot, throw Molotov cocktails, or hijack planes](#).

**Francesca Albanese**, UN Special Rapporteur, Palestinian territories, speaker at HLS event:

- Her [2014 open letter](#) said: “America and Europe, one of them subjugated by the Jewish lobby, and the other by the sense of guilt about the Holocaust.”
- [Contested Israel’s right to “self-defense”](#) by stating that Israel “could have relied on the UN to demilitarize Hamas.”

**Taurean Webb**, a Harvard Divinity School Religion and Public Life Fellow, event speaker:

- [Said/wrote the following comments](#) about American Jews: “It’s also a historical fact that [American Jewish immigrants have always been a foundational building block for the white supremacist infrastructure in this country....We know that from the data.](#)”
- [“Israel uses the idea of ‘chosenness’](#) and the European Jewish Holocaust as a tactic of racial control.”

**Dr. Anis Kassim**, Amman-based lawyer who brought the ICJ case against Israel’s separation wall

- The US is part of the “axis of genocide.”

*“It’s also a historical fact that American Jewish immigrants have always been a foundational building block for the white supremacist infrastructure in this country....We know that from the data.” - Harvard fellow*

Harvard’s recent visiting professors



- [Emad Shahin](#), CMES Shawwaf Visiting Professor, taught [five Harvard classes](#) on the modern Middle East during the 2022-23 school year. (Before that, Shahin had been [convicted in absentia of "conspiring with foreign armed groups, including Hamas and the Lebanese group Hezbollah,"](#) to destabilize Egypt.)
  - Shahin stopped one of the Harvard classes he was teaching to ask a visiting Israeli student to leave because other students felt “uncomfortable” with her presence. The other visiting students were allowed to stay in class.
- [Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian](#), a 2023-24 Religion and Public Life Visiting Scholar in Conflict and Peace at the Divinity School:
  - In 2019, [claimed](#) that the Israeli military was using Palestinian children to test its weapons.
  - [Denied the rape of Israelis by Hamas](#) on October 7<sup>th</sup> (despite live footage).
- [Yael Berda](#), a Harvard visiting scholar since 2020, described Israel’s permit system for allowing Palestinians to enter Israel as follows: [“\[I\]t’s not about security! It’s about segregation, separation, and containment.”](#)

It may not only be visiting speakers and professors who ignore, legitimate, or valorize violence against Israel.

## E. “It’s Indoctrination, Not Education”

*“Unapologetic antisemitism... is a college phenomenon because of what we teach.” - [Harvard Professor and Former Dean Harry Lewis](#)*

In a recent Crimson article, [“Reaping What We Teach,”](#) Professor Harry Lewis, former Dean of Harvard College, describes counting the number of times specific words appear in Harvard’s most recent course catalog—either in a course’s title or description. He found “oppression” and “liberation” in the titles or descriptions of 80 courses each; “Social justice” appears over 100 times. “Decolonize,” 25 times. We, too, have been doing this exercise. Anti-Semitism, the world’s oldest hatred, appears in Harvard’s catalog 3 times. Dean Lewis concluded, “Unapologetic antisemitism... is a college phenomenon because of what we teach.”

One faculty member concurred with Dean Lewis but explained that anti-Semitism on campus reflects a broader problem: “Yes, Jewish students are being attacked.... But every student is getting ripped off.” The faculty member explained: “It’s indoctrination, not education.”



The formation of the faculty-spearheaded [Council on Academic Freedom](#) suggests that this faculty member isn't the only one concerned about what Harvard's education has become. Many faculty know that critical debate and, often, the truth have lost their place at Harvard.

Yes, they came for us Jews first, but democratic, liberal values are at risk.

*Yes, they came for us Jews first, but democratic, liberal values are at risk.*

\* \* \*

We will leave it to the academics to debate theoretically whether anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. In practice, the [impact for Jews at Harvard is what it has always been](#) when any community, academic or otherwise, obsessively demonizes and delegitimizes the only Jewish state.

*The impact for Jews at Harvard is what it has always been when any community, academic or otherwise, obsessively demonizes and delegitimizes the only Jewish state.*

The testimonials in Part II demonstrate the practical impact on Jewish and Israel students: The systemic hostility, harassment, exclusion, and hate they have faced at Harvard, including well before October 7, 2023.

## Part II: Student Testimonials

We felt compelled to listen to students because no one else was. Between mid-October 2023 and February 2024, one intrepid HJAA leader interviewed 22 current or former Harvard students and six Harvard faculty members. Four other HJAA members had conversations with roughly 20 other students. We also spoke with four additional faculty members. The vast majority of students we interviewed were not Israeli students.

Our education audit was done at arm's length, but through these testimonials, Harvard's Israeli and Jewish students shared their experiences in their own words.

Their testimonials document the bullying, harassment, exclusion, and even outright hate at Harvard—from Day 1 to graduation.

There are two points to make before turning to the testimonials. First, when we spoke to students about sharing their testimonies, many started retracting their statements or insisting on anonymity (including that we scrub from their testimonies all possible identifying information). They had come to an understandable conclusion: *We've been asking for help from the administration for months to no avail; why should this time be different? And therefore, why should I open myself up to academic, social and, even, physical retribution?* This self-censorship, on a university campus no less, is of grave concern.

The faculty members were even more afraid of speaking with us on the record; they said it could get them fired or block them from getting a full-time job or promotion. At Harvard, in the 21st century.

*The faculty members were even more afraid of speaking with us on the record; they said it could get them fired or block them from getting a full-time job or promotion.*

Second, we do not claim that every Jewish student is affected. For, as one student clarified for us, “It’s ok to be Jewish at Harvard, as long as you aren’t ‘too Jewish.’” “Too Jewish,” she explained, means showing any external sign of being Jewish, expressing support for Israel, or challenging any part of the anti-Israel script at Harvard.

*“It’s okay to be Jewish at Harvard, as long as you aren’t ‘too Jewish.’”*

As more recent theoretical frameworks recycle anti-Semitic tropes to cast all Jews as the worst of “white” oppressors, many more Jewish students are caught in the crosshairs. As another student told us, “The pro-Palestinians see Israel as the white colonizer oppressor. It's the same thing they say about ‘the white Jews: They bought their way into the school, they have money, they have connections. It's the same mindset.’”

## A. In the Classroom

Our conversations with students gave us a front-row seat to what happens in Harvard classrooms.

### 1. Lack of Viewpoint Diversity or Debate

According to the students with whom we spoke, the lack of viewpoint diversity and debate enables incorrect and inflammatory labels to be misappropriated in and outside the classroom.

- “There is zero room for diversity of opinion about Israel and Palestine [at Harvard].”
- “Jewish history is routinely pushed under the rug.”
- “In terms of our education, that is the most important thing. People don't understand what Zionism is. They think it's white settler colonialism. People need to understand the history, not just the Holocaust, but of the Jewish people and why it's so important for there to be a Jewish state.”
- “[S]uch a significant percentage of the student body think Israel is a colonialist apartheid state.”
- “[They] have managed to put the Palestinian context within a very American context using language like white supremacy etc. [They are] great at [creating their own] narrative.”

### 2. Faculty and TF's Don't Hide Their Bias

Moreover, the faculty and Teaching Fellows (“TFs”—often called “teaching assistants” at other universities) don't even attempt to hide their bias.

- “I am taking a class with Professor Penslar, *Modern Jewish History*. Penslar signed the letter ... [that] calls Israel an apartheid state .... What I have been surprised by in the class is one of the TFs is vehemently anti-Israel, showing only one side.”
- “Post-October 7<sup>th</sup>, there was a really unsettling section. The discussion centered around the faults of [the Israeli government....] It just didn't feel like there was any effort to sympathize with the victims. It was mostly an effort to contextualize why Hamas' actions were justified.”

- “I took a class in the Spring of '23 called *Religion, Nationalism and Settler Colonialism* [at Harvard Divinity School]....The class was just a 12-week hate fest. Each week had its course. One of the courses was titled ‘The Holocaust and Ongoing Nakba.’ It was just a way to compare the treatment of Palestinians to the way Jews were treated during the Holocaust. It was entirely taught from one perspective.... Ultimately in that class, I didn't fully express myself, nor did I feel comfortable expressing my full range of opinions.”

*“I took a class in the Spring of '23 called Religion, Nationalism and Settler Colonialism....The class was just a 12-week hate fest.”*

- “[T]here's a big class on the Holocaust that's like a general education class, so it's not just for people in a major. My friend took this class, and there was a teaching fellow who ... was saying things like it really wasn't that bad. And look at all the ways that Jews contributed to the Holocaust happening.”
- “I can tell you right now that I'm currently in a class on Ottoman history taught by Professor Cemal Kafadar...I've basically stopped going. I mean, Professor Kafadar also signed that letter and has been pretty vocal, and the TF has told us all to go to these teach-ins [e.g., Evolving War in Israel/Palestine, a teach-in sponsored by CMES]. A lot of the other students in the class will come wearing keffiyehs .... Obviously, we're talking about Jews and Muslims in this time in this place. Muslims colonized ... and imprisoned all the Jews there and murdered a bunch of people, and we're just glossing over that part....”

*“[A] teaching fellow ... was saying ‘look at all the ways that Jews contributed that [led] to the Holocaust happening.’”*

Faculty and TFs' biases show in their differential treatment of students, their statements, and their class cancellations. This is significant given that these are authority figures who control students' grades and letters of recommendation.

*“Then [the professor] said, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘Israel.’ He looked at me and said ... ‘I need to ask you to leave the class....’”*

- “[In March 2023] I joined one of my best friends for her Middle Eastern class because she was presenting and invited me to watch her presentation. [There were about] 30 students [in the class], and there were other people in the class who were [also] coming to see their friends present. In the middle of the class, the professor stopped the lecture .... He asked me if I was a student [in his class], and I said, ‘No, my friend invited me to watch her present.’ Then he said, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘Israel.’ He looked at me and said . . . ‘I need to ask you to leave the class’.... People are uncomfortable because I am from Israel. This means that he had to ask [only] me to leave a class where others were also ... there to listen to their friends....”
- “One of the TFs canceled class to go protest with the Palestinian Solidarity Committee.”

*“One of the TFs canceled class to go protest with the Palestinian Solidarity Committee.”*

- “Literally three days ago, [during the] EC 10 lecture [large introductory economics course], there was a walkout that the [PSC supporters] walked out of. They used EC 10 as the central location to begin this rally. These people were not students of the class and walked into the class with their own agenda [and] with megaphones. ‘If you support us, free Palestine, come walk with us.’ About five people [in the class] stood up and walked out. The professor stopped talking when they came in. And then afterward, he said, ‘If anyone feels that they need to leave, this class is being recorded. I’m going to keep teaching, but you’re welcome to make a decision for yourself.’ They took this [comment] out of the recorded lecture. I went to check it out.”
- “On October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Religion and Public Life department [of the Divinity School] released their statement trying to contextualize and rationalize the violence. Saying there are two sides. This was so horrible that the interim dean had to come the next day and say it was so horrible and it only reflects the views of those who signed it. The professor offered no apologies. She is inviting a Palestinian speaker next week who publicly said that Israel made up the stories about babies being beheaded and women being raped.”

Sometimes, faculty anti-Semitism is so blatant and garners a rebuke by the Administration.

- In 2023, after students filed a complaint, Harvard [conceded](#) that a Kennedy School Lecturer intentionally discriminated against three Israeli students in his class.
- In January 2024, the first visible action of the newly formed Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine was to [create an Instagram post with a horrific antisemitic picture](#). It

was then replaced by another post referencing Kwame Ture/Stokely Carmichael, who regularly declared that “the only good Zionist is a dead Zionist.”

- Harvard rebuked the faculty and removed a professor from his role as the advisor of Harvard’s PSC. No other consequences ensued.
- 

### 3. Israel and Jewish Students Lack Full Academic Access

Israeli and Jewish students also don’t have full academic access to Harvard. They avoid certain classes and majors because of the hostilities they would face; they don’t participate in class discussions for fear of academic retribution; and they are also excluded by those who hope to fill events and lecture halls with like-minded peers.

*“I attempted to attend the History department’s Palestine event but was turned away by an organizer who recognized me, despite my having registered, with him giving the excuse of a lack of space.”*

- “I attempted to attend the History department’s Palestine event but was turned away by an organizer who recognized me, despite my having registered, with him giving the excuse of a lack of space.” [The organizer continued allowing other students to enter.]
- “My older sister went to Harvard. She took a Middle East politics course. When she expressed her opinions on Israel [in her assignments], her grade would suffer. She had a terrible experience. Because of her experience, I never wanted to take a class about Middle East politics.”
- “When I came to Harvard, I really wanted to study Middle Eastern studies. I took a class in the Middle East department, and I wanted to take more, and both [my brother] and his boyfriend said, “You can’t concentrate on Middle Eastern studies, you will suffer.”

*“You can’t concentrate on Middle Eastern studies, you will suffer.”*

- “Israelis are not in these Middle Eastern studies classes. There were lots of times I felt weird and uncomfortable saying I was from Israel in my section when I took a Middle Eastern

Studies class. That is the only reason why I'm *not* pursuing [Middle Eastern studies] as my concentration.”

- “[I am] dropping my NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations] department class because it's a hostile environment for me.”
- “Right now, I'm in this dilemma. I have to take an arts and humanities requirement to graduate. I found a [literature] class.... I went to the first two classes and loved it. So I decided to Google the professor .... I see that she retweeted a blog/post that calls for Columbia University to stop a program with Israeli students - to stop ties with Israeli universities. I was like, ‘Wait, I'm an Israeli student. Why do you call for a boycott of Israeli universities? Do I have a place in your class?’ I don't feel like I have fair access to this institution....I feel like I don't belong.”
- “Almost everybody I know, including myself, does not represent their true attitudes in the classroom. We don't want to offend the TF because you want to get a good grade. Especially about something like this - it's so charged, and the assumption is that most TFs are more aligned with the Palestinian cause.”
- “I haven't challenged my TF, I don't feel comfortable. I'm not going to change my TF's opinion. It's not worth it. The section is a small class. The way the grading in the classes works, it is so heavily dependent on participation that it leaves room for interpretation.... I don't make arguments that the TFs disagree with because they don't seem to grade based on the validity of the argument.”

*“Almost everybody I know, including myself, does not represent their true attitudes in the classroom.”*

Jewish and Israeli students who attend the one-sided events are marginalized and publicly ridiculed.

- “Last year, the PSC invited Mohammed el-Kurd to speak. I decided that I was going to listen to him because we have free speech and I wanted to hear what he had to say. I decided to ask a question of him: ‘Mr el-Kurd, do you condemn the killing of innocent Israeli, Jews, American civilians across the world as a form of resistance and liberation?’ He said, ‘I'm not going to dignify that racist question with a response.’ 200 of my fellow peers were clapping for him.”
- “I attended this Mohammed el-Kurd event last year. A few days later, this proctor [resident advisor] came up to me at Annenberg and said, ‘You had a really interesting question. I'd love to find time to chat with you.’ He said, ‘Let's grab a meal next week.’ And I said, ‘Okay.’ I have never heard someone praise terrorists like he did. He's a proctor, so you say yes when he asks you for lunch. I thought he was an authority figure.... I had a crazy conversation with him over lunch. I just remember the trauma of that conversation. It made me realize

for the first time that there are some people who truly are so crazed in their beliefs that freedom fighters are the solution to a problem. That really jarred me.”

*“I have never heard someone praise terrorists like he did. He's a proctor, so you say yes when he asks you for lunch. I thought he was an authority figure.... I just remember the trauma of that conversation.”*

## B. It Pervades Their Lives at Harvard

It starts during Convocation and the First-Year International Program (“FIP”), before students even step into their first class as freshmen. And it permeates every aspect of their supposed new home: where they study, sleep, eat, and socialize. Sometimes, it’s physical harassment. Sometimes, it’s pure hate. To be clear, while Israeli students face the greatest harassment (i.e., they are called “murderers” to their face), the isolation, harassment and hostility extend far beyond them.

Before Day 1 of Class.

*“From day one at the First Year International Program, people heard that I was from Israel, and some people stopped talking to me, including some of the leaders [of the orientation program].”*

- “Convocation freshman year is the first week. My entire convocation was corrupted—hijacked by the PSC.... At convocation, I felt like these people really, really don't want me here. They want me to feel unwelcome. My being a Zionist and a Jew is contrary to their values, and they will use inflammatory rhetoric and tactics that are intentionally designed to hurt me.”
- “[At] my very first experience at Harvard, there was an anti-Israel protest at our convocation. The head of FIP was very unkind to me. He didn't say anything, but he treated me differently from other people. Then I saw him demonstrating during convocation, and then I was like, ‘Oh, it makes sense.’”
- ‘From day one at the First Year International Program, people heard that I was from Israel, and some people stopped talking to me, including some of the leaders [of the orientation



program]. There is an ice breaker event where you divide up by country, and it's known among the Israelis to stay in your room or go [join the] Europe [group]. That is from Day 1 [at Harvard].”

- “I remember that [at the] First Year International Program during pre-orientation ... one specific student turned around and left after I answered that I was from Israel. I see her a lot. That was an unforgettable moment.”

*“My being a Zionist and a Jew is contrary to their values, and they will use inflammatory rhetoric and tactics that are intentionally designed to hurt me.”*

What Israeli and Jewish students see when they walk around their campus home...

- “Last year during apartheid week, I had to walk by a wall with an image comparing Israel to the Nazis with an image of cattle cars going into a gate. I was appalled that there would be Nazi comparisons; no other groups get compared to the Nazis. I ended up switching my walk to class so I could avoid walking by the wall.”
- “I try to avoid the Yard and other central parts of campus.”
- “‘A Zionist state cannot happen without apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and colonialism.’ They had that on the wall during apartheid week. And they get people to believe them. People know and understand racism, apartheid, and colonialism, and [the PSC have used those words] to get them to believe [that they are true about Israel].”
- “As a first year, we're based in Harvard Yard, and most of what is going on takes place there. Even if I didn't want to involve myself, I can't avoid it. If I want to go to Widener [the main campus library], there are times that I can't go because there is a stampede of people on the steps. Hard to avoid because of where we're located.”

...and what they hear.

- “Today they were screaming, ‘There is only one solution, Intifada revolution.’ And saying ‘Globalize the intifada...’ One of the most crazy things I have seen - this is the first time I heard people say something that felt to me that they want dead Jews.”
- “Two days after I came back to campus [from being home in Israel], I saw a protest [being] led by the PSC in Harvard Yard. There was a huge sign that said, ‘Stop the Genocide in Gaza.’ I was just back to campus [having gone] to the funeral of my best friend who was brutally murdered by Hamas terrorists at the Nova music festival. And I just got emotional seeing such provocative and hateful signs.”

- “I have this flight or fight reaction when waking up in the morning and hearing the protestors chanting. I can't always tell what they're chanting, but I always feel that fear, feel triggered, and I [don't want to] walk through them to find out what they're saying.”

*“[T]his is the first time I heard people say something that felt to me that they want dead Jews.”*

It pervades every aspect of their new home.

Where they study.

- “Someone I know was studying in [xxx] library. He couldn't focus because he was sitting next to ~15 people in Keffiyehs who wanted to write an op-ed in support of that proctor who had been let go. My friend didn't want to stick around and study for the math exam. They had severely skewed what had happened, and how they were presenting it wasn't even rooted in fact. It was just a mishmash of claims that the proctor had made. They said there were no complaints against the proctor, but that's not true, there were at least three complaints.”

Where they sleep.

- “Last year I had a mezuzah outside my dorm, and that was taken down.”
- “There's been a lot on the house email lists, and it makes me not want to come back and live in my building.”
- “Someone living in my [house] is friends with some other Israelis. At some point, [my friend] told me that this girl was talking to someone on my floor, and the girl on my floor said [that] I ‘murdered people....’ This girl on my floor asked this person I don't know well (but we're now friends) if she knew me and then said, ‘Did you know she was in the IDF, and therefore she murdered people.’”

Where they eat.

- “What I find most distressing, and what influences my happiness most, is that when I walk into the house dining hall, and I say, ‘hi,’ people won't say hi back just because I was born in Israel and served in the Israeli military. That goes a long way with [affecting] your feeling of belonging.”
- “You can't eat in Adams, literally. I ate there once and I was like, ‘I am never going back there.’ They all know what Israelis look like. They actively stare at us....[They] know I'm

Israeli and hate me for it. Some of them stop talking when I walk near them. Someone from my NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations] department class looks away when she sees me.”

Where and with whom they socialize.

- “One of the most horrible [experiences] I had - a month [after October 7th], I was sitting at the bar under Annenberg. I see this girl who I know is Jewish. She asked me how I was doing, and I said, ‘Not good.’ I showed her a photo of my three friends from the [Nova] party, and I say, ‘yep they aren't with us because of the attack.’ She said, ‘Doesn't it feel weird when your friends die as a result of the ongoing occupation and erasing millions of lives of Palestinians.’ She goes on and says, ‘It's so easy to forget the little people and their stories....’ I was shocked.”
- “This one girl who wasn't in our blocking group but also was invited [to the Dominican Republic] wouldn't come because I was going. I am Israeli, and she didn't want to be pictured with someone who is Israeli. She wasn't shy [about it], she was public about it....Because people are worried about their social reputation, sometimes it isn't that the person has a personal issue with Israel but that other people will see them taking a pro-Israel stand.”
- “One friend said, ‘It was too political to come to a vigil.’ That was really sad because this wasn't political, it was personal. I [have family who are] from [one of the kibbutzim that was attacked]....A friend of mine was killed. And a very close friend was severely injured from a grenade. So, for me, it was really personal, and it was really upsetting that people saw it as political and let politics get in front of their friendships.”

And what student organizations and causes they can join.

- “It's what happens when Black Lives Matter, which everyone agrees with and supports, says that in order to support this cause, you also have to support the Palestinian cause. It's that. And then on campus where it's like everything is advocacy, everything is social movements that I actually care a lot about, but then I get excluded from these spaces.”

And we haven't even covered the non-Harvard-sponsored social clubs that are inaccessible to any student who is too Israeli, too Jewish, or too Zionist.

## C. Bullying, Harassment, and Hate of Israelis and Jews

What is taught in classrooms, presented at events, and advocated on social media by faculty, guest speakers, TFs, proctors, and students alike has emboldened the current climate of anti-Semitism.

“Zionist is a code word for Jew”

- “They use the word Zionist so they can say that they’re not antisemites....”
- “Because of my Jewish and Zionist identity, people think I am a monster. I have heard people say, ‘Zionists should be slain.’ I have heard people say, ‘You can’t possibly believe an Israeli, they are all settlers.’”
- “Two friends and I wrote an article for the Crimson ... I was very proud to be a part of that. There were no repercussions in person, but it was a different story on Sidechat [a social media platform for Harvard affiliates]. They always claim they aren't antisemitic, but the truth of [how they feel can be seen] on Sidechat. [After our article was published], we were called Zionist puppets.”
- “It's very clear at HDS [Harvard Divinity School] that Zionism is a very dirty, insulting word. To be called one is an insult. [It is] certainly not something you self-identify [as] publicly.”
- “What's disappointing is that they are smarter, and Zionist is a code word for Jew. You can't say Judaism is wrong, or the Jews control the media, but you can say Zionists control the media. And that's what is so hard [because they use the word Zionist so they can say that they're] not antisemites....”
- “They see [Israelis] as murderers....People are actively telling people to not be friends with [Israelis]. Israelis are the only people where their nationality is held against them. Doesn't happen to my friend who is Russian....[My Israeli friend] was called a war criminal.”

*“Israelis are the only people where their nationality is held against them. Doesn't happen to my friend who is Russian....”*

Sometimes the hate from other students isn't even coded.

- “We all knew people who were just murdered. And to see this [statement with all the student groups], [on October 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>], we couldn't believe it. We know people at these organizations, we are in classes with them. It didn't make sense [to us]. It was an extreme way of exposing what people think. It was disgusting for us ... We couldn't take the space to mourn.”
- “[Students on campus] are saying we're lying....How am I supposed to be in class with someone who posted the day before that they are supportive of the murder and rape of my people? I could've been that person.”
- “I'm orthodox, but I mean, I'm a girl obviously, so it's not so identifiable. Most people cannot pin the long black skirt unless they know something. But I'm engaged and my fiancé [who wears a kippah] was walking on campus on October 9<sup>th</sup>, and someone who [my fiancé]

believed to be another student came up to him and spit in his face, oh my God, just on campus.”

- “Someone carved a swastika on the bulletin board at Currier House. It was in 2022, around the time of apartheid week and The Crimson BDS movement.”

A growing number of Jewish students fear for their physical safety.

- “I am scared to be a Jew here right now.”
- “I think I feel more safe in Israel than here. I just think everyone knows my identity, and the only thing that protects me from people hurting Israelis is that they have too much to lose because they are Harvard students.”
- It's pretty scary to walk around campus knowing someone who is comfortable physically assaulting a religious Jew is potentially still on campus....And I'll tell you that he and pretty much all the other [orthodox] guys on campus have started wearing baseball caps.
- “I felt very afraid even walking to Annenberg because, outside the science center, there would be protests or people asking me a question you can't say no to - like, ‘Did you condemn the murder of Palestinian children?’”
- “All the protests are right outside Mass Hall. A lot of the time, they are on the side where the dorm entrance is. There were days I was afraid to leave my room because there were people outside chanting, ‘End the occupation’ and ‘globalize the intifada.’”
- “It's scary to walk through the protest. I usually walk through the back doors [or the] side entrances at [the] science center.”
- “Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, there are certain things [I] notice that I didn't notice before. There is a police car constantly parked in front of Hillel. [It makes you think], are we in a state of danger if they have to place that kind of protection outside?”

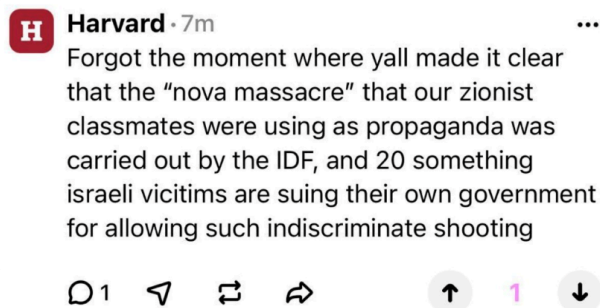
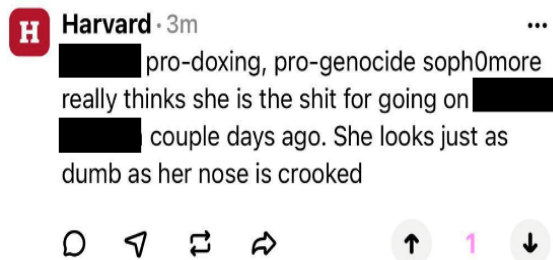
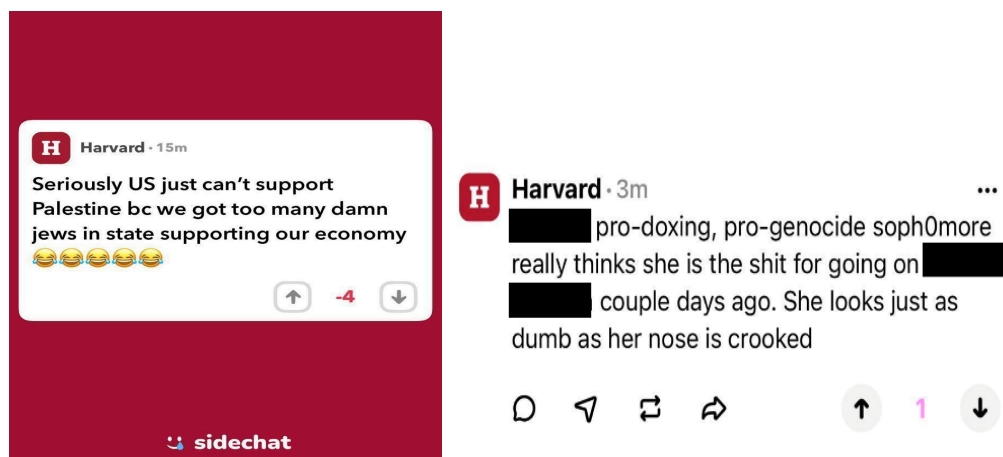
Harvard’s very own anonymous social media platform, Sidechat, which requires a Harvard email address to logon, has exploded with anti-Semitic tropes and posts.

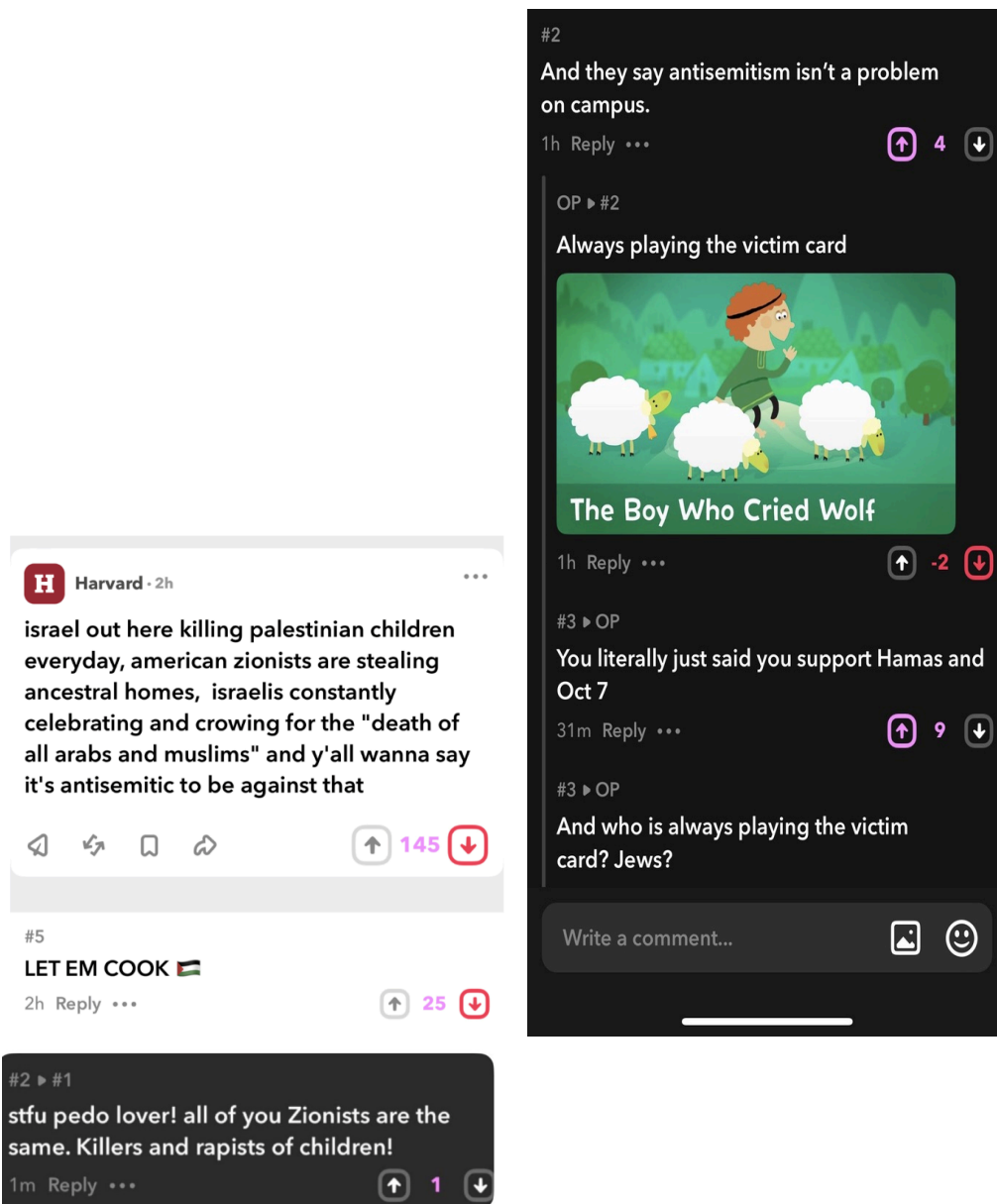
- “When you see posts [on Sidechat] that are so vehemently anti-Israel and false and are getting 500 - 700 upvotes, [it’s clear that] we’ve lost the information war on this campus because you see such a significant percentage of the student body think Israel is a colonialist apartheid state - just look at the upvotes.”
- “Sidechat is always gross, and I typically like it because a lot of it's funny, and you just sort of ignore the gross parts, but I had to delete it because it was just too much. I couldn't handle it emotionally. But one thing that I saw, and I actually reported it to the moderators for being antisemitic, and then they didn't take it down, they didn't agree....It was basically, they were

basically saying, 'I don't understand why, I really don't get how, okay, so some white Germans killed some white Jews a while ago, and now they get a whole country [because of the] Holocaust....' People saw it and were like, 'yes, I agree with this. This makes sense.'"

*"[On Sidechat] they were basically saying... 'I really don't get how, okay, so some white Germans killed some white Jews a while ago, and now they get a whole country [because of the] Holocaust....'"*

Although there are too many Sidechat examples to share in this one document, below are some of them. The confidence students have to repost and like these posts, likely because they are anonymous, exposes a deep-seated and pervasive hatred of Jews at Harvard.





## D. The Administration's Non-Response

Despite clear violations of Harvard's recently updated (September 2023) [non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies](#), the Administration's response is, by and large, no response. The repercussions for the perpetrators of hate speech and bullying, none.

- “[A University] administrator ... said that ‘intifada’ is a 2 out of 10 in terms of hate speech.”
- From the student who was kicked out of a class for being Israeli: “First, I reached out to Hillel, and I asked them what should I do. They checked, and they told me to file a

complaint through the DEI [office]. I had a conversation with my Resident Dean and Dean Khurana....Everyone said, 'Hey, I hear you.' There was no follow-up."

- From the student who discussed the swastika in Currier House: "All Harvard did to address it was that the faculty deans of Currier put out a statement that said, 'We deplore hate.' The statement went to the Currier House email listserv. It was never addressed more broadly. I have a friend who lived there and was very angry, and so that's how I knew about it."
- "The double standard of the Harvard administration is very jarring. A gay law school student was assaulted by another law school student. An email went out to every student at the law school the same day saying that they were suspending the person. It has been three weeks since the assault [of a Jewish student at Harvard Business School], and only one of the people has been removed from an official Harvard position [but not suspended]."
- "At the talk, one of the moderators was an HDS [Harvard Divinity School] student and that student is under FBI investigation for the now infamous protest at HBS [Harvard Business School; this student participated in the assault on a Jewish student] ... .He got fired from being a proctor but is still a student. I saw him in class today, wearing his Keffiyeh. HDS students have written countless letters saying that they kicked him out because he's black and because he's pro-Palestinian."

Jewish and Israeli students are the proverbial "canaries in the coal mine." What they are experiencing reflects the failure of education writ large.

- "If you're in a classroom and ... the popular opinion is to just say that 'Israel is terrible, from the river to the sea...' [and] if you're not challenging yourself outside of the classroom and in the classroom—[which] is the responsibility of faculty—**then future leaders of the world are not having developed beliefs that have been challenged.**"

Denied equal access to an education and experience. Denied equal application of the code of conduct. Afraid for their physical, emotional, and intellectual safety. Victims of a pervasive cancel culture. Subject to a pervasive hostile environment. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Harvard: Are you listening?



## APPENDIX A

### Harvard Events on Israel and the Palestinian Territories

#### Sample from the 2022 - 2023 School Year

- *Hamas in Cyberspace: Social Media and New Forms of Political Expression*, Mohammedwesam Amer
- *Learning in Context: Narratives of Displacement and Belonging in Israel/ Palestine*
- Book talk: "*Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire*"
- *Viruses Remaking Borders? Unwanted Organisms in Palestine/ Israel from Covid-19 to Climate Change*, Natalia Gutkowski
- *The Embodiment of Protest: Hunger Strikes, Human Rights, and the Health of Palestinian Political Prisoners*
- *A Conversation with Omar Shakir*, Israel-Palestine Program Director at Human Rights Watch
- *Colonial Cartography in Palestine-Israel and the Decolonising Potential of Counter-Maps*, Zena Agha
- "*Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and Decolonization beyond Partition*," Leila Farsakh, Maha Nassar, Susan Akram
- *Settler Colonialism, Structural Racism, and The Palestinian Right to Health Special Edition: A Conversation with the Authors*
- *Crossing a Line: Laws, Violence and Roadblocks to Political Expression - Book Event* with Amahl Bishara
- *Litigating Palestinian Rights in the Israeli Supreme Court: Legitimation or Resistance*
- *Diversity in Israel*, Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh
- *Settler Logics: The Israeli Settlement Movement in Context*, Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Oded Haklai
- *American Public Views Towards the Middle East: The Political Psychology of Racialization*, Karam Dana
- *Jerusalem: Examining Settler Colonialism and Undoing Colonial Knowledge Production*, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian
- *Palestine Trek Bearing Witness to apartheid, military occupation, and settler-colonialism*
- *Graduate Students 4 Palestine: Go Back and Tell Them What You Saw*
- *Escalating Violence and Restrictions on Health in Palestine: An On-The-Ground Perspective*
- *Video: The Palestinian Question as a Jewish Question*, Raef Zreik

#### Sample from the 2023-24 School Year

- *Is Activism Futile? The Case of Israel*, Amira Haas (CMES).
- *Israel-Hamas War? Tackling the Root Causes* (Israel's settler-colonial and carceral occupation). Francesca Albanese (CMES)
- Fall 2023 Evening Seminars, Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law (Harvard Law School)

- *The Ongoing Nakba*.<sup>6</sup> *Engaging Critically with Palestine*, Rashid Khalidi (CMES).
- *Gaza, A Colonial War?* Rashid Khalid (CMES)
- *Deconstructing Apartheid: International Humanitarian Law & Israel*, Anne Herzberg (Law School).
- *Palestine and the Historian: A History Department Symposium*. Panels include: “Borders, Apartheid, and Carcerality.” (Speakers not shared).
- *Flash Webinar: Attacks on Healthcare in Gaza* (School of Public Health).
- *The South Africa ICJ Genocide Case Against Israel: Implications for Palestinian Health*, Timothy Fish-Hodgson, Katherine Iliopoulos, Tlaleng Mofokeng, Rania Muhared (CMES, Public Health)
- Book talk: *"The United Nations and the Question of Palestine,"* Ardi Imseis (CMES).
- *Keynote panel: Stories of resistance, solidarity, and joy through student activism* (Six students discussing their Palestinian activism), School of Education.
- *Palestinian Exception, A Panel on Repression and Resistance*, part of the Bell Collective for Critical Race Theory (Harvard Law School).
- *Palestinian Women in Gaza: War, Health, and Feminist Solidarity*, Zahra Ali, Lila Sharif, Sara Ihmoud (CMES).
- *"Colonizing Palestine: The Zionist Left and the Making of the Palestinian Nakba,"* discussion of the book by Areej Sabbagh-Khoury (CMES and Divinity School).
- *We Charge Genocide, the Potential and Limits of International Law*, Nora Erakat, (CMES).

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<sup>6</sup> The meaning of “the Nakba,” which in Arabic means “catastrophe,” is highly debated. As with everything else related to this subject, there are [multiple perspectives](#) on the evolution in the word’s meaning.

## Appendix B

### The Script's Inaccuracies, Distortions, and Omissions

**There is large and highly regarded peer-reviewed body of literature exposing the prevailing script's inaccuracies, distortions, and omissions.**

- Jews were indigenous to the land of Israel and have had a continuous presence there for over 3000 years, with a Jewish kingdom by 900 BCE. (See [here](#) and [here](#).) Jews who came from Eastern Europe to Israel after World War II moved to Israel as bedraggled, displaced refugees often having languished in displaced person camps for years after WWII because no country would take them.
- Less than half of Israelis are white. [Israel is a multi-ethnic society](#). More than half of Israelis are descendants of Jews coming from other Middle Eastern countries, having been expelled (often violently) after Israel was established; more than 20% of Israelis have an Arab or Druze identity. The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians is not a racial conflict.
- Unlike in Gaza, Arab citizens of Israel have the same political rights as Jewish Israelis and have served in the Israeli [government](#), [in parliament](#), and [as judges](#).
- Hamas is not a grassroots movement of freedom fighters acting out a desperation; it is a [well-established and extremely well-funded franchise](#) of a global network of armed organizations devoted to [global jihad](#), eliminating Israel, and [killing as many Jews as possible](#). (Even its more PR-friendly [Charter in 2017](#) (a revision of [its 1988 Charter](#)) calls for eliminating Israel.)

**The script omits vital facts and the complexities about the Middle East.**

- Israel's violence against Palestinians and supposed desire to absorb the Palestinian Territories anchor the script. What does not appear to be covered:
  - There is no acknowledgment that, after living across the Middle East for 2500 years, [roughly 900,000 Jews were persecuted](#), lost their property, and faced severe violence in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen before many of them came to Israel.
  - Israel has offered, and the Palestinians have repeatedly [\(1937, 1948, 2000, 2008\)](#) refused to accept a nation-state for themselves if it meant Israel would have a state of its own.
  - During the most ambitious peace negotiations, the Palestinians launched the [Second Intifada](#). From 2000 to 2005, over 100 Palestinian suicide bombings maimed or killed Israelis in Israeli buses, cafes, and streets.
  - Hamas has launched significant attacks against Israel in [2008, 2009, 2014, 2021](#), and then on October 7<sup>th</sup>. And, in between, it has fired [tens of thousands of rockets](#) into southern Israel with the intent of maximizing civilian harm.
  - Israel is the size of [New Jersey](#) and has a population of 9 million people.

- Harvard's programs describe Gaza as occupied even though Gaza has not been occupied since 2005 when [Israel forcibly removed all Israelis living there](#). There was a ceasefire in Gaza on October 6, 2023.
- Israel is the [only democracy](#) in the Middle East, with free elections, an open press, and the protection of minority rights. Certainly, Gaza isn't a democracy. In Gaza, Hamas persecutes minorities, including [women](#) and [Christians](#), and [kills anyone who is LGBTQ](#). As such, Israel is an essential strategic ally and friend to the US and Western democracies.
- Prior to October 7<sup>th</sup>, Israel [provided employment](#) to an estimated 140,000 Palestinians from the Palestinian Territories; Israel also offered [health care](#), [including to the October 7th mastermind](#), which saved his life.